

Persecution Watch

Jordanian Islamic Court Grants Child Custody to Christian Widow

A court of Islamic law in Amman ruled in favor of Christian widow Siham Qandah, revoking the legal guardianship of her children's Muslim uncle. On April 12, the court removed Abdullah al-Muhtadi from his court-designated guardianship and ordered him to repay misspent funds, Compass Direct reported. Al-Muhtadi, who had 30 days to appeal the ruling, has been fighting a seven-year legal battle to wrest custody of his niece and nephew from Qandah. Qandah and her children live in the northern city of Husn, where they attend the Husn Baptist Church. Under Jordanian law, once the children turn 18, they are allowed to choose whether their official identity will be Muslim or Christian.

Eritrean Christians Jailed For Viewing Home Video

Eritrean police arrested 16 members of the Kale Hiwot Church on March 13 after they were found watching a Christian video together in the town of Adi-Kibe, Compass Direct reported. Two older women were released the following day after paying fines, but at press time the other 14 remained jailed, though no official charges had been filed. In September, the northeast African nation was added to the U.S. State Department's list of "countries of particular concern" for its religious freedom violations. Eritrean officials deny ever-increasing reports of a severe government crackdown under way against Protestant churches, Compass said.

Pentecostal Pastor Still Missing in Indonesia

The family of Pentecostal pastor Jokran Ratu, kidnapped Dec. 3 on the remote Indonesian island of Buru, still does not know whether he is dead or alive, Compass Direct reported. "We always ask the police whether they have made progress or found Mr. Jokran's body," the Rev. Henry Lolaen, a pastor from nearby Ambon island, told Compass. Meanwhile, police were preparing for the April 25 anniversary the Maluku Sovereignty Front's failed attempt to gain independence. Last year, an illegal flag-raising ceremony led to violence between Muslim and Christian groups in Ambon,

leaving at least 20 people dead and dozens of buildings destroyed, Compass said.